

**Notes on Meeting**  
**Steering Committee for the Survey of State Library Agencies**  
**December 6-7, 2000**

The Steering Committee for the Survey of State Library Agencies met on Wednesday and Thursday, December 6-7 in the 8th floor conference room at the NCES offices, 1990 K Street, in Washington, DC. Mr. Shubert called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. on Wednesday.

Present were: Adrienne **Chute** (NCES), Denise **Davis** (NCLIS Statistics and Surveys Director), Michelle Farrell (IMLS Office of Library Services), Patricia **Garner** (Census), Elaine **Kroe** (NCES), Keith Curry **Lance** (Director of Library Research Service, Colorado State Library), Libby **Law** (Data Coordinator, South Carolina State Library), Mary Jo **Lynch** (ALA), Kim **Miller** (NCLIS/LSP), Johnny **Monaco** (Census), Amy **Owen** (Utah State Library Director), Jeffrey **Owings** (NCES Associate Commissioner for Library Surveys, Longitudinal Studies, and Elementary/Secondary Studies Division), Joannel **Porter** (NCES), Cindy **Sheckells** (Census), Joseph F. **Shubert** (New York State Librarian *Emeritus*), Diana Ray **Tope** (FSCS Steering Committee, Georgia), Lamar **Veatch** (Director, Alabama Public Library Services), Robert S. **Willard** (NCLIS Executive Director, and Alan **Zimmerman** (Data Coordinator, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction). *(All individuals listed here were present for the entire meeting, except for Mr. Owings and Mr. Willard, who were present only on Thursday, December 7; and Mr. Monaco who was present only on Wednesday).*

Also present were Abe **Abramson**, Commissioner-member of the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, Cathy **Burch** (ESSI), Suzanne **Dorinski** (Census), Jeff **Williams** (NCES), and Leslie **Scott** (ESSI).

Excused were Kate **Nevins** (ASCLA, SOLINET), Peggy **Rudd** (Director and Librarian, Texas State Library), and Barratt **Wilkins** (COSLA, State Librarian, Florida State Library).

**(1) Introductions**

Members and guests introduced themselves. Mr. Shubert noted Mr. Owings as unable to attend on Wednesday but scheduled to be with the Steering Committee on Thursday.

**(2) Chair's Remarks**

Mr. Shubert commented that he had described the March 2000 Steering Committee meeting as “ a platform for a new phase in the development of the Survey” and that accomplishments of the last nine months have demonstrated further development with several “firsts.” These included:

- completion of a customer survey
- improved data
- further simplification of the Survey process and resultant website publication of the FY 1999 data by early June and the full E.D. Tabs on the website on September 8.

- Inclusion of an index in the FY 1999 E.D.Tabs.

He also noted Mr. Owings' appointment as Associate Commissioner since the March meeting.

### **(3) Recent Developments and Plans in the NCLIS Library Statistics and Surveys Office**

Ms. Davis reported on plans and current projects in the Statistics and Surveys Office, including a research agenda that has been approved by Martha Gould, Chair of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. The agenda includes three major projects:

- 1) Internet Connectivity in Public Libraries, 2000 Study
  - ❖ Policy Report will be contracted to an expert consultant. Completion is expected in Spring 2001.
  - ❖ It remains unclear if future studies will focus on connectivity as the 1994-2000 studies have. The Summary Findings of the 2000 study is available on the NCLIS website <http://www.nclis.gov/statsurv/statsurv.html>
- 2) School Library Media Centers
  - ❖ A hearing will be held sometime in April 2001 in Cincinnati, OH.
  - ❖ NCLIS concerns include Internet connectivity, funding, staffing and continuing education of School Media Specialists/Librarians
- 3) Persons with Disabilities
  - ❖ Access to technology
  - ❖ Adaptive technology needs, etc.
  - ❖ This may be a survey, similar to the Internet Connectivity studies

In addition, NCLIS is actively involved in the five-year review of the NISO Library Statistics Standard, Z39.7. A Forum planned for February 15-16, 2001 in Washington, DC will bring together key researchers and members of the library community to discuss library statistics, performance measures, and the mechanisms for evaluating and assessing library services in the "Information Age".

In the course of responding to questions on the Connectivity reports, Ms. Davis pointed out that 95.7 percent of public libraries are connected to the Internet and there is a need for additional information on services provided as a result of these connections. There continues to be interest in policies adopted by libraries and policy guidelines. Steering Committee members raised questions on the expected outcomes of the NISO conference.

### **(4) Status of the 2000 Survey**

Ms. Kroe asked Census staff to brief the Steering Committee on the status of the 2000

survey inasmuch as Census has assumed some of the editing responsibilities that she formerly handled for the survey.

Ms. Sheckells reported that, as of December 6, six states have loaded their 2000 data; 16 other states are “registered active,” having submitted part of their data; and 27 states, also “registered” are “inactive” since they have not yet submitted any data. Two states have not registered.

The next key dates for the 2000 Survey are: January 15, 2001 when 2000 data are due, and February 15, 2001, which is the last date on which data can be submitted (the lock down date).

Census will edit the 2000 data and prepare imputations as needed. Steering Committee members raised questions on imputation processes and policy, how a user can tell if a figure has been imputed, and why it is necessary to impute data even if all states have reported data.

Ms. Kroe pointed out that imputations are needed to complete national totals in instances where one or more state are unable to provide data for a cell and indicate that the figure should not be a zero states.

A table for which a national total required imputation can be identified in two ways. A state that has not submitted data has a pound sign (#) shown instead of a figure. The first footnote for such as table reads:

# National totals include imputations for missing data, but the estimate is suppressed at the state level.

For an example, see Table 11 in the FY 1999 E.D. Tabs, (pages 46-47) which reports data on library service transactions (question 114).

There was consensus among the Steering Committee members that it would be useful for the Steering Committee to learn more about the imputation process and the policies followed for it's use.

Some Steering Committee members who had attended the FSCS Committee meeting earlier in the week expressed concern about the bunching up of FSCS and StLA data in mid-2001. Backlogs in dealing with FSCS data will mean that three years of FSCS data will be competing simultaneously for staff time and other resources.

Another resource question in 2001 may delay development and provision of a peer comparison tool for StLA data. Steering Committee members continue to believe that such a tool is needed and the August 2000 Customer Survey found that chief officers of eight of the nine states surveyed endorsed the idea of a “table generator” for regional and other state comparisons and an option that would enable a user to export web site text or tables to incorporate into local documents.

### **(5) Preparations for the 2001 Survey**

Ms. Garner reported that Census would work with the 2001 survey in much the same way it is handling its responsibility for the 2000 Survey. She noted that NCES is revising its Statistical Standards.

Steering Committee members returned to discussion of an NCES/Census backlog in processing FSCS data. Mr. Williams responded to questions on resource problems in a period of “level funding.”

### **(6) Discussion of the Implications of Findings in the Nine-State Sample Customer Survey and Next Steps and Follow-up**

Ms. Davis, who had e-mailed the September 8, 2000 report on the State Library Agency Customer Satisfaction Survey Feasibility Study, distributed additional copies to members of the Steering Committee. The report describes and summarizes findings of an August survey of nine StLAs, generally following the draft proposal that the Steering Committee reviewed in March. Resources were not available to conduct a survey of all 50 state library agencies.

The purpose of the nine-state survey was both to get customer feedback and to help NCES, the Steering Committee, and other key stakeholders to determine the value of conducting a 50-state StLA Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) for improving the annual survey and expanding use of the data. The CSS feasibility study covered three topics:

- (1) Use of NCES data on State Library Agencies,
- (2) Usefulness of the data, and
- (3) Ways to improve the State Library Agency survey, the data collection process, and the dissemination of the data.

Ms. Davis “walked” the Steering Committee through the 27-page document (10 of the 27 pages were the survey instrument, formatted for the telephone interviews with the nine states). The report includes a description of the survey process, summaries of findings, and responses from the individuals interviewed.

Ms. Davis also pointed out that:

- 1) More information is required for a full understanding of what information StLA customers need about other StLAs.
- 2) Some respondents suggested that NCES provide data or implement a peer comparison utility that permits comparison within and by geographic regions of the country.
- 3) Two respondents indicated they never use the data collected.
- 4) We learned StLAs use NCES data. What we did not learn is how they use the data beyond broad categories of use (e.g., presentations, reports, etc.).

- 5) We learned what data StLA customers used and levels of satisfaction. More information is needed to understand specifically what makes StLA customers satisfied with the data.
- 6) We were successful in gathering some information to improve the data and the StLA survey instrument.

Steering Committee discussion ensued. Several Committee members commented that they were pleased to have the data, and were pleased with the 67 percent response rate indicating use of the data, and an 89 percent registering of satisfaction levels. The Committee's consensus was that members need more time to examine the report. The discussion also indicated that members generally concur with Ms. Davis' recommendations that the Steering Committee should work with NCES to:

- Determine which questions or data categories have longitudinal or trend value
- Determine which questions or data categories lend themselves to other forms of collection including, but not limited to, FRSS
- Determine which questions or data categories need to be revised, eliminated, or added
- Assist NCES in their review of the StLA CSS feasibility study findings as appropriate

#### **(7) COSLA Research and Statistics Developments**

Ms. Owen reported on recent work of the COSLA Research and Statistics Committee focusing on gathering and reporting data to support the reauthorization of LSTA:

- 1) The Committee reviewed draft tables summarizing information submitted by the states to IMLS. This review confirmed the need to carefully frame how to array the data in order to avoid confusion and misleading impressions. It also confirmed that the number of grants requested vs. the number of grants funded is likely not to prove to be a useful indicator of need. Potential grant applicants make every attempt to assess the likelihood of funding before devoting time and effort to developing a grant application. Therefore, perceptions about the amount of funding available strongly influence how many applications are submitted.
- 2) Barratt Wilkins, Committee Chair, directed his staff in compiling a useful bibliography of studies documenting library service impacts. (Members of the LSTA Reauthorization Task Force are also working on a similar project.) The Committee expects that such studies can be generalized and used as indicators of impact on similar LSTA-funded projects.
- 3) At the fall COSLA meeting, the COSLA Legislation and the COSLA Research and Statistics Committees met together to discuss alternative methods for describing needs. They recommended, and the COSLA membership agreed, to conduct an informal poll of all COSLA members to ascertain their expectations about likely areas for future LSTA expenditures should LSTA funds double. The results of that poll (41

states responded) indicated strong interest in the following topics:

- Bibliographic Access and Resource Sharing Projects -- 21 states
- Digitization Projects -- 20 states
- Competitive Grants Program Enhancements -- 20 states
- Database Licensing -- 19 states
- Continuing Education -- 17 states
- Children and Youth Services - 16 states
- Telecommunications and Technology Infrastructure -- 14 states
- School library Media Services -- 6 states.

In addition, 22 states identified additional activities, which were not easily categorized among the topics above.

Future Committee work will include: continued search for impact studies; discussions about how to best frame the available data; looking at a variety of indicators of need; and coordination with IMLS.

Mr. Wilkins, who was unable to be present, transmitted the following resolution adopted by COSLA and asked that Mr. Shubert read it to the Steering Committee:

**Resolution of Appreciation  
To The National Center for Education Statistics**

Whereas, the improvement of the inclusiveness and timeliness of national library data collection efforts have been a long-standing goal for the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, the National Commission on Library and Information Science, and the National Center for Education Statistics; and

Whereas, a major breakthrough was achieved with the administration, data collection, and dissemination of the 1999 State Library Agency Survey and Report, and

Whereas, the 1999 State Library Agency Survey was chosen by the National Center for Education Statistics to be the first library survey conducted via the Internet and the World Wide Web; and

Whereas, the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies enthusiastically embrace the new national web-based data collection system; and

Whereas, all of the State Library Agencies met the data collection deadlines established by the Nation Cent for Education Statistics; and

Whereas, the Chief Officers were rewarded for their efforts by having the data efficiently and expertly compiled, displayed, and disseminated in just a few months of the deadline;

Now therefore Be It Resolved that the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, meeting this 23rd day of October, 2000, in Springfield, Illinois, do hereby commend the management and staff of the National Center for Education Statistics successfully embarking on this noteworthy data collection effort for State Library Agency data, and appreciate the expertise of the United State Census in everything association with this project.

#### **(8) NCLIS Developments that May Impact on the State Library Agencies**

Mr. Willard described some of the uncertainties with which he and the Commission deal as changes take place in the Federal administration in January. He noted that the Commission is composed of 15 voting members, including the Librarian of Congress, plus the director of IMLS (non-voting). As a result of recent term expirations and two deaths, there are now five vacancies. The Senate has not acted on four nominations, which the President sent forth earlier this year and, without Senate action, those nominations expire when the Congress adjourns *sine die*. However, it is anticipated that some or all of these individuals will be "recess appointments" and will therefore serve until the end of the first session of the next Congress. Given the large number of appointments the new President will need to make to Cabinet agencies, commissions, and other Federal offices in the months following January 20, it may be awhile before the White House gets to appointing NCLIS members. With other upcoming term expirations, it is possible that there may be ten vacancies of the Commission by July.

Mr. Willard commented on the need to resolve understanding of the filtering requirement language in the Appropriations bill and the implications of that legislation.

NCLIS has acquired additional office and is re-configuring offices, including those for the Statistics and Surveys Office. He also noted the use of the Internet Survey now on the NCLIS website, the enthusiastic response to the "Sister Libraries" program, and work now being done with the NCLIS archives.

#### **(9) Recent Developments in NCES and Perspective on the StLA Survey**

Mr. Owings expressed pleasure at the COSLA "Resolution of Appreciation" and spoke warmly about the cooperation and success of the StLAs in using the Web-based process to speed the collection of data. He also noted the additional responsibilities Census staff are undertaking this year to speed the editing and publication of the data. Mr. Owings invited questions from the Steering Committee.

In responding to a question from Mr. Shubert regarding the previous day's discussion of a possible "bunching up" of FSCS and StLA data in mid 2001, Mr. Owings said that NCES intends in the coming year to keep to the schedule achieved with the 1999 data: release in June and the E.D. Tabs on the website in September.

Mr. Zimmerman explained that NCES staff reports at the FSCS meeting indicated that

the convergence of work on 1998 and 1999 FSCS data and the StLA 2000 data has caused some anxiety on the part of people who are interested in both public library and state library data. Mr. Williams noted that limited resources might pose a problem at that juncture.

Mr. Owings acknowledged resource problems, expressed confidence in the additional help from Census, and reiterated that he would be pushing hard for both StLA and FSCS data publication, noting that he does not want to lose the momentum now in the StLA program.

Mr. Williams responded to a question on the publication of data collected in 1998 in the FY 1997 Survey of Cooperatives, saying that the data would likely be published as a “Working Paper” rather than as an E.D. Tabs. Brief Steering Committee discussion indicated consensus that a “Working Paper” would be a good idea.

The discussion also reached back to methodological problems with the Survey of Cooperatives. Committee members said that NCES or NCES contractors sometimes encounter problems in securing library data because they do not keep StLA Chief Officers informed. In surveys of branch public libraries, NCES will encounter problems if the survey coordinators have not been in touch with the central administrative units to which the branches report. Mr. Owings expressed his understanding of the importance of such administrative considerations.

Mr. Owings described the 2002 survey of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade cohort of 20,000 students, a longitudinal survey in which, in addition to school library data collected, NCES will also collect data on public library use. He reiterated his concern for a picture of school-public library cooperation and information on library use by students and their parents. The Household Population Survey in October 2001 will reach 60,000 households.

Steering Committee members expressed interest in knowing the results of the two studies. Mr. Owings said that all NCES data will be on the web, including all past surveys. In responding to a question on how data from earlier reports with discontinued formats would be placed on the Web, he said NCES is committed to making “all files, all reports” available on the Web.

Mr. Owings reiterated his interest in having library questions in other NCES studies. He noted that Westat is completing a Fast Response Survey on participation in adult education and Internet-based services.

#### **(10) Policy Questions Work**

The Steering Committee reviewed Mr. Shubert’s paper, StLA Data and Public Policy Questions, A Paper to Assist in Steering Committee Discussion, December 7, 2000.

Steering Committee discussion centered on parts IV and V. Mr. Owings noted his interest in the examples of recurring policy interest in StLA governance, finance, and “functions and change” outlined in section III and the observations on “State Library



Agencies and Education Policy” in section IV.

The Steering Committee discussed where it might go in continuation of its March interest in data on the “digital divide and the factors Mr. Shubert identified. It appears that there is no consensus in ALA, COSLA and other library organization on what constitutes the “digital divide,” although political discussions often use the term.

Steering Committee opinion was divided on the questions that Mr. Shubert raised in points 1 (“the digital divide”), 2 (our process for advising), and 3 (use of StLA on-line resources).

Mr. Lance suggested that the Steering Committee needs a more formal and more representative structure for advising on data elements, such as that used by the FSCS Steering Committee. There was brief discussion of the difference between the two surveys and the fact that the COSLA has affirmed that its Research and Statistics Committee is the body that provides COSLA advice for the StLA survey. Ms. Lynch suggested that the first afternoon of the March meeting might be used for small group discussions of topics or questions for the Survey and advice on wording, definitions, and rationale.

Following this discussion, and with Mr. Owings’ encouragement, the Steering Committee agreed to use another task force and involve all members of the Steering Committee to prepare recommendations for the Steering Committee to discuss and act upon at its March 28-29 meeting.

Ms. Owen, Mr. Zimmerman, Mr. Veatch, and others to be appointed will serve on the task force. Mr. Shubert and Ms. Davis will co-chair the Task Force.

To ensure that we have a paper with recommendations that we can discuss and act upon at the March meeting, all members of the Steering Committee are expected to react to e-mail during the course of the Task Force’s work.

#### **(11) Timetable for Publishing Data on State-Based IMLS Grants and Expenditures**

Ms. Farrell reported on IMLS data and other IMLS developments. In introducing her, Mr. Shubert recalled that in March Ms. Sywetz had reported on IMLS progress in collecting data and reporting data that will be needed for evaluation of the first five years of the LSTA program and plans to mount on the website complete data assembled in the charts that she had shared with the Steering Committee in recent meetings.

Ms. Farrell reported that it now appears is impossible to place the “numerical/landscape” data on the website because of problems with the data. She said that IMLS plans to have a database of library projects available on its web site by March 2001. She also reported on developments designed to assist the states in reporting and evaluation:

- IMLS has been providing outcome-based evaluation (OBE) training for State

Library Administrative Agencies. Participation is voluntary. To date, eighteen states (CA, CO, FL, ID, IL, NJ, NC, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, OK, TX, WA, WY, NH, VT) have received this training. Of these, NH and VT received OBE training from the directed grant side. CA, CO, FL and MD are now providing components of OBE training to their sub-grantees.

- At the IMPACT Conference in Washington, DC on November 15-17, IMLS provided training on various evaluation methods and other topics. It also provided, in a pre-conference to new LSTA coordinators, training on completing the LSTA annual report.
- IMLS, in cooperation with the University of Missouri Columbia, is hosting the second annual "Web-Wise Conference on Libraries and Museums in the Digital World." It will be held February 12-14, 2001 at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, DC. This year's theme is the Digital Divide. For more information see: <<http://cecssrv1.cecs.missouri.edu/webwise/>>

Ms. Owen reviewed cooperation between the COSLA Research and Statistics Committee and IMLS in gathering data that will assist in evaluation of the LSTA program at the national level.

#### **(12) New Business**

Mr. Shubert noted that the Steering Committee received in its folder a description of the John G. Lorenz Award. Thirty-three states received Lorenz awards for prompt submission of 1999 data. Mr. Wilkins is reminding COSLA that each state that meets the January 15 due date for filing 200 data will receive the Lorenz Award.

#### **(13) Adjournment and Next Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m. on Thursday, December 7.

The Committee will meet Next meetings will meet next on March 28-29 and September 26-27, 2001 in Washington, D.C. The meetings will begin about noon on the Wednesdays and conclude at noon on the Thursdays.

J. Shubert, January 12, 2001  
StLA Notes on Meeting Dec 00

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List of documents distributed before or at the meeting:

1. Agenda
2. FY2000 StLA Status Report as of 12/1/2000 (**agenda item 4**)
3. Attachment E; FY 2000 State Library Agencies Survey Facsimile (**agenda item 5**)
4. State Library Agency Customer Satisfaction Survey Feasibility Study: Executive

- Summary; prepared by Denise Davis, Director, Statistics and Surveys (**agenda item 6**)
5. *Resolution of Appreciation To the National Center for Education Statistics*; prepared by COSLA (**agenda item 7**)
  6. StLA Data and Public Policy Questions; A Paper to Assist in Steering Committee Discussion, December 7, 2000; prepared by Joe Shubert (**agenda item 10**)
  7. Task Force on StLA data and Policy Questions; Final Recommendation, May 24, 2000 (**agenda item 10**)
  8. The Survey of State Library Agencies: The Survey and Its Steering Committee; A Statement Approved by the Steering Committee February 20, 1998
  9. The John G. Lorenz Award for Timely and Accurate Submission of StLA Data; Established by the StLA Survey Steering Committee, February 20, 1998
  10. Notes on StLA Survey Steering Committee Meeting, March 25, 2000
  11. StLA Survey Steering Committee Roster and Members